

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Reference Resources in Irish Literature

BY JAMES BRACKEN

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The recent publication of Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney's *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation* suggests some of the difficulties in attempting to distinguish an Irish identity in English literature. This *Beowulf* can be interpreted as a clever trick of literary appropriation: if, as it has been said, the great works of Irish literature have been written in English, in Heaney's *Beowulf* one of England's literary treasures is made Irish. Just what constitutes Irish literature often seems to be as much a matter of semantics as national identity. In the *Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*, editor Robert Welch argues that *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, edited by Seamus Deane, the standard by which all subsequent anthologies of Irish literature must be measured, confronts "the discontinuities in Irish literary culture." Some collections have taken Deane's example to the extreme: for instance, *The Ireland Anthology*, edited by Sean Dunne, includes on its "literary map of Ireland" Edmund Spenser, William Thackeray, Katherine Mansfield, and John Betjeman, Chevalier de la Tocnaye, Alexis de Tocqueville, Friedrich Engels, and Pope John Paul II. In *The Oxford Book of Ireland* editor Patricia Craig takes "the opposite extreme ... of the formidable *Field Day Anthology*"; she observes that her volume could "do no more than skim the surface of Ireland." Neither approach has adequately delineated a single Irish identity. As Norman Vance concludes in *Irish Literature: A Social History: Tradition, Identity and Difference*, "There is still little agreement about what Irish literature is or should be."

The Irish identity of writers and works in the English language often seems to be mostly ignored. Vance singles out Yeats, Joyce, and Heaney as writers who attract attention as specifically Irish writers and observes that the Irishness of Maria Edgeworth, Synge, Sheridan, and Goldsmith "is often overlooked." Anthologies of English (as opposed to American) literature show the English literary canonization of Swift, Goldsmith, Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, and others, and standard English literary bibliographies, guides, and other reference works have been equally acquisitive in lumping Irish writers and works among English. *Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* identifies as "Irish" (by birth, parentage, immigration, or otherwise) the likes of Sedulius Scottus, Edmund Spenser, Laurence Sterne, Sir Richard Steele, Edmund Burke, Lafcadio Hearn, C.S. Lewis, John Arden, and Iris Murdoch, among others.

However controversial Irish national identification may be, the reality is that for practical purposes Irish identity is often irrelevant for research on Irish literature because the major Irish writers are very well served by the very same resources used for English literary research and for literary research in general. Accordingly, this essay sidesteps questions of what constitutes Irish literature and who is an Irish writer, and looks instead at finding information for Irish writing and

writers (in English) in sources particularly geared toward things and people Irish.

This essay divides Irish reference resources into a number of different categories. Given the advances in online reference tools, Internet resources, whatever their type, are treated in the first section. The next section looks at various kinds of reference tools traditionally available in print — handbooks, bibliographies, indexes, and so forth. The essay concludes with an extensive discussion of journals, which are valuable resources for up-to-date reference information as well as for criticism and research. Only the rare library supporting extensive studies in Irish literature will need to own all these resources; but undergraduate librarians in institutions supporting the study of Irish (and British) literature will want to be aware of the mass of materials available.

Finally, were this essay to include every general resource useful to the researcher of Irish writers and writing, it would be twice as long and unnecessarily detailed. As the essay will state again and again, such enormous (and invaluable) tools as *Bartleby.com*, *Voice of the Shuttle*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *MLA International Bibliography*, and large subscription online databases are neither discussed nor included in the list of works cited. The author assumes those resources — indeed any resources covering British literature and literature in English in general — as starting points for any of the authors discussed herein. This essay concentrates on reference resources focused specifically on Irish literature, Irish writers, and Irish studies, and the author urges the reader to be alert to this focus throughout.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

In addition to wide-ranging literary sites familiar to all librarians, several Web sites focus on Irish literature, both in general and more narrowly. Perhaps the most important of these is *IASIL: International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures*, where Bruce Stewart offers an "Annual Bibliography of Scholarly Titles on Irish Literature" and a comprehensive list of links that includes universities, libraries and special collections worldwide, newspapers in Ireland and abroad, journals available online, electronic text centers and other databases (including Gaelic dictionaries), galleries and theaters, publishers, booksellers, individual writers, and other miscellaneous relevant information.

**Web sites for individual
Irish writers are dynamic
and vary widely in quality.**

Particularly useful for links to general literary and author pages is *Irish Resources in the Humanities*; though less comprehensive than *IASIL*, this site includes some information not provided there. *Local Ireland* provides county-by-county information on active writers, in addition to news and features about Irish writing and writers; bibliographies of literary reference and research resources, histories, journals, and editions; lists of literary competitions, discussions and writing groups, publishers, writing centers, and the like. Most useful for its a-to-z list of writers, Philip Casey's *Irish Writers Online* covers not only major writers (Seamus Heaney, Samuel Beckett, W.B. Yeats, James Joyce) but more modern minor writers than several printed biographical dictionaries list. Casey includes brief on-site biographies (mostly checklists of works) and some links. With its lists of journals, publishers, and competitions, *Irish Writers' Centre* serves as a directory both for working writers and for those who would like to contact writers or use their works. Most useful for information about contemporary writers, the site maintains a directory of writers who are available for readings and workshops and links to the

Society of Irish Playwrights Register of Plays site, which lists plays available for performance. Those wishing to access the journal literature will want to go to *Searc's Web Guide*, with its useful list of printed and electronic Irish journals.

Special Collections

Researchers can access important special collections through such sites as *National Library of Ireland* and *Dublin City Public Libraries*. Of particular interest is *National Archives of Ireland*, where one finds "research guides with images" that amount to online exhibits on specific research topics (e.g., "The Great Famine, 1845-1850s," "Committee on Evil Literature [1926]," "Women's History") in addition to news, genealogy, databases, and publications. This site also maintains a very useful list of links to many infrequently cited but useful resources — for example, *Public Record Office of Northern Ireland*, *Irish Film Archive*, and the Church of Ireland's *Representative Church Body Library*. Those interested in the study of the book in Ireland will want to visit *Centre for Irish Literature and Bibliography*.

One of the strongest collections of Irish literature in North America is housed at Emory University. Among the most readily accessible sites, *Irish Literary Collections at Emory* offers excellent and specific descriptions of the main components of the collection, which covers the Irish literary renaissance (Yeats, Maud Gonne, the Abbey Theatre, T. Sturge Moore, and Lennox Robinson), contemporary Irish poetry (Heaney), the Belfast Group (Michael Longley, Ciaran Carson, James Simmons, and Derek Mahon), and Samuel Beckett. The site also includes collection and subject guides, descriptions of services, and fellowship and other information.

Full Text Access to Literary Works

Though none of the several Web resources listed here can compete with well-known omnibus subscription databases for access to full text, by far the most comprehensive electronic full text collection of Irish works per se is *CELT: The Online Resource for Irish History, Literature and Politics*. The site provides HTML and SGML viewable and downloadable "texts in translation, plus the originals in Irish, English, French and Latin" from all historical periods. The most thoroughly represented modern writer in *CELT* is Oscar Wilde (for whom no printed concordance or verbal index is presently available), and the site also offers texts by Padraic Pearse, James Connolly, Michael Collins, Horace Plunkett, and others. Works range from Oliver Goldsmith's poem "The Deserted Village" to obscure, anonymous literary, historical, legal, genealogical, religious, and scientific texts, mostly in Irish (this is the place to find such classic Irish writings as *Táin Bó Regamna*, *Leabhar na h-uidhri*, and *Annals of Ulster*).

Julia Wrights offers occasional full-text access at *Bibliography of Irish Literature (1789-1840)*, though this site is less useful than some on a couple of counts. In addition to confining coverage to a narrow period 1789-1840, the bibliography lists only about 20 English-language and three Irish-language writers and entries for works lack bibliographic information and links to biographies and bibliographies. Likewise, Michael Sundermeier's *Irish Literary Sources and Resources* and Dagmar Müller's *Irish Poetry Page* can be described as limited bibliographies and anthologies of selected full texts, either residing on these sites or linked on others.

Individual Authors

Web sites for individual Irish writers are dynamic and vary widely in quality. The best sites offer full texts of authoritative editions of works and scholarship, current reference and other information, and a means to communicate with experts in the field. The major writers —

Joyce, Yeats, Wilde, Beckett, Shaw, et al. — are the focus of the greatest numbers of sites. The most important and useful sites for Joyce include *James Joyce: The Brazen Head*, a catchall of Joyce news, textual, biographical, and critical information (including reference indexes and study guides), and a comprehensive classified list of Joyce links (which unfortunately does not distinguish the authoritative from the marginally useful); *James Joyce Quarterly*, which gives the contents of issues of this major scholarly journal; and *International James Joyce Foundation*. Other popular and useful Joyce sites include *Work in Progress: A James Joyce Website*, *James Joyce: WWW Resources*, *James Joyce Web Page*, and *In Bloom: James Joyce*.

The major and most frequently visited and referenced sites for Yeats are far less substantial than those for Joyce. *Critically Yeats* briefly describes classified sites for full texts of works and criticism, organizations, journals, and special collections. Another resource is *W.B. Yeats*, a 1999 biographical essay with a brief list of Yeats's works.

Major web sites for Beckett are even less substantial and, furthermore, less readily identified and linked to either major Irish sites or subscription services. The most important site, *The Samuel Beckett Endpage*, edited by Porter Abbott, includes a time line, a brief biography with supporting biographical materials, selective bibliographies of Beckett bibliographies and of works by and about Beckett (including a particularly interesting listing of works in audio and videocassette), information on current and upcoming productions and conferences, and links to various sites. *Samuel (Barclay) Beckett (1906-1989)* comprises a brief 1999 biographical essay with bibliographies of works by and about Beckett.

Subscription Databases

A substantial amount of information on Irish authors can be found in general electronic literature resources, though this reviewer is more impressed with the print versions of these than with the electronic, which frequently omit reference to the author's Irishness. But two unique subscription databases are worth noting: *Studies in Irish Literature* and *W.B. Yeats Collection*. Though it remains to be seen if the former, available on CD-ROM via the Internet, is "peerless" as Greenwood advertises, the database does offer the text of three of the publisher's print sources: *Dictionary of Irish Literature*, ed. by Robert Hogan; *Modern Irish Writers*, ed. by Alexander Gonzalez; and *Irish Playwrights*, ed. by Bernice Schrank and William Demastes — material that can be searched individually (by title) or collectively. The database profiles more than 1,300 novelists, playwrights, humorists, politicians, publishers, and arts organizations — providing three "comprehensive biographical sketches" (one from each source) for the likes of Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, and Heaney — and more than "50,000 bibliographic entries of published works and criticism" (a claim that takes no account of replication in the three sources indexed).

W.B. Yeats Collection is vastly more successful and useful, permitting searching by keyword, title/first line keyword, genre, and date of first publication of a comprehensive selection of identified editions of Yeats's writings. Selected poems in the collection have audio links to recorded readings by Eavan Boland.

PRINTED RESOURCES

General Research Guides and Surveys

Two general research guides for literature in English are especially useful as basic starting points for identifying printed and selected electronic resources for Irish literature: James

Harner's *Literary Research Guide* and James Bracken's *Reference Works in British and American Literature*. Harner's chapter "Irish Literature" reminds researchers to consult the guide's separate listings for English literature and general sources, and it also firmly contextualizes Irish literary research within literary research in general. Harner updates the volume regularly on his Web site.¹ Bracken's volume, a guide to reference and research resources for more than 1,500 individual authors, largely glosses over the issue of Irish identity by rendering as British any writer who is not American. However, Bracken includes an appendix of nationality that identifies 40 Irish writers and others claimed as Irish in works like *Dictionary of Irish Literature* and *Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* (both discussed above). Bracken attempts to identify and describe the best of the rich, comprehensive, and complex reference literature for major writers; describes the few published bibliographies and other reference works for less significant writers; and identifies coverage of writers who are not the subjects of individual works — i.e., information appearing in such resources as *Anglo-Irish Literature* and its supplement, *Recent Research on Anglo-Irish Writers*, both edited by Richard Finneran (and both now dated); Kimball King's *Ten Modern Irish Playwrights*; and *Irish Playwrights, 1880-1995*, edited by Bernice Schrank and William Demastes.

The earlier evaluative surveys of research, e.g., Finneran's, with their comprehensive contributions on the full range of major and minor Irish writers, seem to have evolved into a modern phenomena known as "bio-bibliographical critical sourcebooks," as perfected by Greenwood. Although file surveys in Finneran's volumes all remain very useful, many require the kind of updating that the myriad more recent (albeit less definitive) sourcebooks readily provide. At the same time, whereas the few earlier standard surveys limited coverage to a selection of canonical writers, the more recent sourcebooks have tended to cover a greater number of less well known writers (though at the cost of saying less about each writer).

Finneran's heir appears to be Alexander Gonzalez, editor of the "bio-critical sourcebook" *Modern Irish Writers*. Although several similar sourcebooks cover a few Irish writers, Gonzalez's collection is the only completely Irish survey of research. Whereas Finneran focused on about a dozen canonical writers, Gonzalez covers 77 in all genres — starting in the Irish literary renaissance with George Moore and Lady Gregory and extending to the present, as represented by Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Paul Muldoon, Paula Meehan, and Rita Ann Higgins. Emphasis is on English language writers, with Tomás Ó Crohan (Tomás Ó Criomhthain) being the only predominandy Irish-language writer included. With brief biographies, surveys of primary materials and critical receptions, and selected bibliographies, Gonzalez's collection offers the best starting point for reviews of research and resources for the broadest range of major modern Irish writers.

The critical literature for the major Irish writers is so fully developed that several guides to research are available. Stanley Weintraub calls his *Bernard Shaw: A Guide to Research* a "subjective overview by one scholar." Exemplary narrative surveys for specific writers include *Critique of Beckett Criticism*, by P.J. Murphy et al., and Eitel Timm's *W.B. Yeats: A Century of Criticism*. Zack Bowen and James Carens's *A Companion to Joyce Studies* and Edward Kopper's reviews of criticism *John Millington Synge* and *Lady Gregory* take a less narrative approach but are equally helpful.

Ian Small's *Oscar Wilde Revalued: An Essay on New Materials & Methods of Research* is now the best place to start for Wilde. Small offers a solid review of research, covering biography, letters (with transcriptions of previously uncollected letters), manuscripts, literary histories, critical studies, editions, and bibliographies, with an excellent selective bibliography.

Literary Handbooks, Dictionaries, and Encyclopedias

The category of literary and biographical handbooks and dictionaries is crowded. Although one might question the need for multiple general dictionaries to accommodate Irish writers and writing, libraries may wish to own several Irish dictionaries to assure coverage of variant English and Irish spellings of some writers' names (n.b., Tomas O Crohan and Tomás Ó Criomhthain, mentioned above). To date, this writer has found no single general Irish literary dictionary sufficiently comprehensive.

Hogan's *Dictionary of Irish Literature* and Welch's *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* have already been discussed but deserve special mention under this heading.² Hogan's dictionary offers the broadest range of Irish writers (especially authors writing in Irish language); providing biographies and entries for places, things, and a few specific works (plus extensive bibliographical information for entries), Hogan includes in this volume a witty introduction, contributed introductory essays on Gaelic literature and contemporary literature in the Irish language, a note on the history of Irish writing in English, a chronology of Irish writing, and a cumulative bibliography. Though unindexed, *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* is a benchmark as an all-purpose, well-rounded, one-volume companion. Welch covers fewer writers than Hogan, but readers can use his alphabetical listing to go straight to works; topics; terms peculiar to Irish folk forms, styles, and genres; literary themes (e.g., "big house"); and important literary journals.

Several recent companions offer supplemental or incidental material. Foremost among these is James Cahalan's *Modern Irish Literature and Culture: A Chronology*, which covers the period 1601 - 1992, with an emphasis on 1800 onward. Cahalan provides brief biographical sketches of recurrent figures (e.g., Edgeworth, Joyce, Beckett), and the main chronology gives historical contexts, with subdivisions for fiction, prose nonfiction, poetry, music, periodicals, cultural institutions, film, architecture, education, and so forth. Though Cahalan's allusive, narrative approach sacrifices depth of detail, the chronology does include bibliographies of secondary works and an index of names, titles, forms, and topics. In *The Mercier Companion to Irish Literature*, Sean McMahon and Jo O'Donoghue offer a straightforward approach similar to Welch's. Most entries are authors and works, with a smattering of places and terms; the bibliography lists primary works.

Histories, Surveys, and Biographies

Many of the volumes in *A New History of Ireland*, edited by T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Byrne, offer valuable historical context for Irish literature written in both English and Irish languages (for example, volume 6 includes a concise overview of the relationship between Irish literature and Irish politics). Other historical works that may prove useful include *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, edited by S.J. Connolly, which has brief entries for a handful of topics and figures in literature and popular culture, and *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Irish Culture*, edited by W. J. McCormack, an a-to-z arrangement of signed entries, with select bibliographies. McCormack's book is particularly useful for basic information on interdisciplinary terms, movements, and other topics not directly covered in Hogan or Welch. A thorough topic index aids access.

Histories and surveys treating individual Irish writers abound. From Cambridge come several volumes in their "companion" sequence: *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, edited by Derek Attridge; *...to Beckett*, edited by John Pilling; *...to Oscar Wilde*, edited by Peter

Raby; and ...to *George Bernard Shaw*, edited by Christopher Innes. Covering the full range of the subject writer's life and works, each of these volumes includes general and specialized contributed essays that offer approaches from rather specific angles. Certainly Joyce is the most thoroughly "hand-booked" Irish writer, with companions for most of his major works and recurrently reprinted familiar (old) handbooks and regularly developed new hybridizations. Old standards include William York Tindall's *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce* (recently reprinted by Syracuse), Shari Benstock and Bernard Benstock's *Who's He When He's at Home: A James Joyce Directory*, and A. Nicholas Fagnoli and Michael Patrick Gillespie's *James Joyce A to Z: The Essential Reference to the Life and Work*. Joining these are recent slimmer works: John Blades's *How to Study James Joyce*; Thomas Edward Connolly's *James Joyce's Books, Portraits, Manuscripts, Notebooks, Typescripts, Page Proofs: Together with Critical Essays about Some of His Works, A Companion to James Joyce's Ulysses: Biographical and Historical Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, edited by Margot Norris; and Harry Blamires's *The New Bloomsday Book: A Guide through Ulysses*. All are worth acquiring.

The first significant Wilde companion — Norman Page's *An Oscar Wilde Chronology*, appeared in 1991, but the decade since has seen several new ones. Karl Beckson's *The Oscar Wilde Encyclopedia* covers works, persons (including fictional and dramatic characters), publishers, places, and topics and offers a brief chronology and an excellent general index. Entries for major works are very thorough: for example, the entry for *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* gives detailed information on historical and biographical background and publishing history; an explication of the poem; and summaries of early critical reviews, with a bibliography. Anne Varty takes a more systematic, thematic approach to Wilde's life and work in *A Preface to Oscar Wilde*, offering chapters and subchapters for specific topics, works, etc., and separate chapters for *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Salomé*. A reference chapter contains biographies of Wilde's circle, a gazetteer, a glossary of critical terms, and an excellent classified annotated bibliography of primary and secondary works. Other worthwhile recent handbooks for Wilde include Merlin Holland's *The Wilde Album* and Robert Tanitch's *Oscar Wilde on Stage and Screen*. Researchers should also be alert to Stephen Calloway and David Colvin's biography, *The Exquisite Life of Oscar Wilde*.

The most useful and up-to-date handbooks for Yeats include Suheil Bushrui and Tim Prentke's *An International Companion to the Poetry of W.B. Yeats* and the second edition of Edward Malins's *A Preface to Yeats*, with revisions and additions by John Purkis. Complementing these is Sam McCready's *A William Butler Yeats Encyclopedia*. Containing nearly 1,000 entries on Yeats's works, McCready's volume provides publication and production histories; plot summaries and character sketches; definitions and identifications of mythological characters, places, and organizations; biographies of family, associates, and contemporaries; and notes on personal allusions in works. Entries include bibliographical references. A more specialized and limited handbook is Lester Conner's *A Yeats Dictionary*, which includes people and places in Yeats's poetry. In addition, the Yeats biography industry continues to thrive. Joining volume 1 of R. F. Foster's authorized biography, *The Apprentice Mage, 1865-1914*, are Terence Brown's critical biography *The Life of W. B. Yeats*; Brenda Maddox's *Yeats's Ghosts: The Secret Life of W.B. Yeats*; the third edition of A. Norman Jeffares' *W.B. Yeats, Man and Poet*; Edward Larrissy's *W.B. Yeats*; and Stephen Coot's *W.B. Yeats: A Life*.

**Histories and surveys
treating individual Irish
writers abound.**

In addition to the recent revision of Hugh Kenner's *A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett*, current handbooks for Beckett include *Samuel Beckett: A Casebook*, edited by Jennifer Jeffers, and *The Critical Response to Samuel Beckett*, edited by Cathleen Culotta Andonian. Also noteworthy is a biography by James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*.

Michael Hardwick and Mollie Hardwick's *The Bernard Shaw Companion* remains an excellent resource on that playwright, though, like Phyllis Hartnoll's *Who's Who in Shaw*, it is dated. Recent additions to the literature on Shaw in this category include *Shaw on Theatre: A Half Century of Advices*, compiled by Mary Chenoweth Stratton, and Bernard Dukore's *Shaw's Theater*.

Two other older guides that remain useful are Paul Odell Clark's *A Gulliver Dictionary*, which was reprinted in the early 1970s, and *A J.M. Synge Literary Companion*, edited by Edward Kopper, published the following decade.

**Several new
Bibliographies have made
Irish women's writing
more available.**

Resources on modern and contemporary Irish writers are scarce. The only Sean O'Casey handbook remains John O'Riordan's *A Guide to O'Casey's Plays: From the Plough to the Stars*; though it reappeared recently, Hugh Hunt's *Sean O'Casey* first was published in 1980 (in the "Gill's Irish Lives" series) a few years before O'Riordan's guide. *Frank O'Connor: New Perspectives*, a biographical and critical companion edited by Robert Evans and Richard Harp, offers several features of reference value, including a chronology and a classified, briefly annotated primary and secondary bibliography that is especially useful for descriptions of special collections. Those seeking information on Heaney can go to the valuable prefaces in *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney*, edited by Elmer Andrews, a volume in the "Columbia Critical Guides" series, and in Andrew Murphy's *Seamus Heaney*, part of the "Writers and Their Works" series. Similarly useful introductions for Friel appear in *Brian Friel: A Casebook*, edited by William Kerwin, which also includes a chronology and selected bibliography, and in Nesta Wyn Jones's *Brian Friel: Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, *Translations*, *Making History*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, part of the "Faber Critical Guides" series.

On the biography front, readers should not overlook notable recent treatments of two important Irish writers: Michael O'Sullivan's *Brendan Behan* and Adrian Frazier's *George Moore, 1852-1933*.

Genres and Gender

Though comprehensive guides of Irish literature by genre — drama, fiction, and poetry — would be useful, only drama has attracted significant recent attention. Standard works include Robert Hogan and James Kilroy's six-volume documentary history *The Modern Irish Drama*, a

year-by-year account of early-20th-century drama, and D.E.S. Maxwell's excellent *A Critical History of Modern Irish Drama, 1891 -1980*. Complementing these are John Greene and Gladys Clark's *The Dublin Stage, 1720-1745: A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments, and Afterpieces*, which provides an exemplary guide to theatrical performances (albeit for a very short period) and Greene's parallel volume, *Theatre in Belfast, 1736-1800*, with its calendars of the seasons of six theaters, including detailed information about admission prices, curtain times, performers, etc. The only similar calendar for modern Irish drama is *New Plays from the Abbey Theatre, 1993-1995*, by Michael Harding et al., which editors Christopher Fitz-Simon and Sanford Sternlicht claim presents "current directions in the Irish drama." *Irish Playwrights, 1880-1995: A Research and Production Sourcebook*, mentioned earlier, follows a familiar model, gathering biocritical essays for 33 writers with descriptions of archives and primary and secondary bibliographies. Entries for major plays relate performance histories. This volume is particularly valuable for coverage of less known writers like Hugh Leonard, John Keane, Donagh MacDonagh, and Anne Devlin. Sanford Sternlicht provides selective bibliographies of primary and critical works for a smaller selection of more recent writers in *A Reader's Guide to Modern Irish Drama*.

Several new bibliographies have made Irish women's writing more available, particularly poetry. In her *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Irish Women Poets*, the most important and useful of several bio-bibliographical sourcebooks on women writers, Anne Ulry Colman crushes "three gender-related myths" regarding Irish women poets: that women only began writing in Ireland in the past 50 years; that until the mid-twentieth century there was little interest in literature by or about women writers; and that nineteenth-century women writers were isolated "literary oddities." Colman's extensive coverage includes at one extreme Lucy A. M. Peachy and Mary Wilson (who contributed single poems to *The Irish Monthly* and *The Dublin University Magazine*), and at the other writers like Katharine Tynan and Margaret Cusack (whose bibliographies extend to nine pages and five pages, respectively), Emily Lawless, Mary Ellen Downing, Frances Browne, and Lady Gregory. Though wider in scope and not nearly as useful as Colman's work, Ann Owens Weekes's *Unveiling Treasures* also looks at women writers and extends beyond poetry to drama and fiction. Covering women from the eighteenth century to the present, Weekes presents not just women born in Ireland, but also writers who identify with Ireland — Irish Murdoch, Elizabeth Bowen, Maeve Binchy, Eavan Boland, Edna O'Brien, Nuala Archer, Ronit Lentin. Brief, annotated biocritical articles often quote primary works and include bibliographies of works by the writers. Also noteworthy is *Irish Women Authors*, a catalogue of a University of Delaware exhibition of works published from 1772-1991 by more than 70 Irish women writers.

Bibliographies ...

Bibliographies are, of course, vital reference resources, and several have been mentioned above in conjunction with material of other kinds. This section treats a variety of kinds of bibliographies, from broad to narrow.

... **of Bibliographies:** The fullest (albeit dated) bibliography of Irish bibliographies is Alan Eager's *A Guide to Irish Bibliographical Materials: A Bibliography of Irish Bibliographies and Sources of Information*, now in its second edition and in need of updating. Both Harner's *Literary Research Guide* and Bracken's *Reference Works in British and American Literature* can be used as selective supplements to Eager's volume. ... **(General) of Works by and about Writers:** The dilemma of distinguishing resources for Irish literature from those for British (and English literature) and the significance for that task of the *New Cambridge Bibliography of*

English Literature (NCBEL), edited by George Watson, and its revision *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* (CBEL), edited by Joanne Shattock, cannot be overstated. Particularly in the revised edition, for example, one finds that the section for Maria Edgeworth locates principal repositories of manuscripts; listings of bibliographies for Oscar Wilde that are seemingly exhaustive and conveniently arranged; and dramatically improved listings for numerous other Irish writers.

... **of Special Collections:** Neither of the two major guides to special collections and archives related to Irish literature in particular is adequately detailed to be completely satisfactory: What DeeGee Lester's *Irish Research: A Guide to Collections in North America, Ireland, and Great Britain* offers in global comprehensiveness is offset by lack of detail; and *Directory of Irish Archives*, edited by Seamus Helferty and Raymond Refaüssé, which records 224 collections and archives by institution, with brief information on contents and access and an index of names, provides only selective listings for literature (e.g., it identifies only three collections for Joyce and two for Yeats, and the description of the National Library of Ireland does little more than identify the existence of holdings for Edgeworth, Shaw, Yeats, Joyce, Kavanagh, the Irish literary renaissance, and the Abbey Theatre).

... **of Individual Authors (Primary Works):** Some major Irish writers are in excellent bibliographic shape. The many excellent descriptive bibliographies include Alan Denson's *Printed Writings of George W. Russell* (AE); J'nan Sellery and William Harris's *Elizabeth Bowen*; Merja Makinen's *Joyce Cary*; *The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth*, recently released by Pickering & Chatto; Edwin Gilcher's *A Bibliography of George Moore* and *Supplement to A Bibliography of George Moore*; Ronald Ayling and Michael Durkan's *Sean O'Casey*, George Jefferson's *Liam O'Flaherty*, Dan Laurence's two-volume *Bernard Shaw* (updated in *Bibliographical Shaw*, edited by Laurence and Fred Crawford with MaryAnn Crawford); the third edition of Allan Wade's *A Bibliography of the Writings of W.B. Yeats*, edited by Russell Alspach; and Balliet's *W. B. Yeats: A Census of the Manuscripts*, written with the assistance of Christine Mawhinney; and Richard Admussen's *The Samuel Beckett Manuscripts*. King's annotated bibliography *Ten Modern Irish Playwrights*, mentioned previously as a general research guide, provides brief but comprehensive bibliographic information for works by (and about) John Boyd, Brian Friel, John Keane, Thomas Kilroy, Hugh Leonard, Thomas Murphy, and Edna O'Brien.

The bibliographic literature for other writers needs attention. For example, Joyce's oeuvre is sufficiently complex that the standard descriptive listing, John Slocum and Herbert Cahoon's *A Bibliography of James Joyce, 1882-1941*, though excellent, needs to be supplemented by such catalogs as Robert Scholes's *The Cornell Joyce Collection: A Catalogue*. Joyce is also served by Michael Groden's *James Joyce's Manuscripts: An Index* (which also indexes Garland's 63-volume facsimile *James Joyce Archive*); Groden updates this index in an appendix in Bowen and Carens's *A Companion to Joyce Studies* (discussed above).

For Beckett, one must go to several compilations and catalogs: Raymond Federman and John Fletcher's *Samuel Beckett: His Works and His Critics: An Essay in Bibliography* serves as the primary compilation, but it needs to be supplemented by *Samuel Beckett 1* (2), by R. J. Davis et al., and by Davis's *Samuel Beckett: Checklist and Index of His Published Works, 1967-1976*. Catalogs of several Beckett collections housed at universities will also prove useful: Carlton Lake's *No Symbols Where None Intended: A Catalogue of Books, Manuscripts, and Other*

Material Relating to Samuel Beckett in the Collections of the Humanities Research Center (University of Texas); Sharon Bangert's compilation *The Samuel Beckett Collection at Washington University Libraries*, and University of Reading's *The Samuel Beckett Collection: A Catalogue*. A thorough and comprehensive Beckett bibliography is needed.

Some primary bibliographies are simply outdated — Temple Scott's *Oliver Goldsmith Bibliographically and Biographically Considered*, published in 1928 and reprinted in 1974, and Stuart Mason's *Bibliography of Oscar Wilde*, first published in 1914 and reprinted on a regular basis, to name just two. Although revised and corrected in 1963, Herman Teerink and Arthur Scouten's edited volume *A Bibliography of the Writings of Jonathan Swift* (first published in 1937 as Teerink's *A Bibliography of the Writings in Prose and Verse of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*) suffers from awkward organization and must be updated with several sources. The fullest descriptions of Sheridan's works are appendixes to several turn-of-the century biographies.

Other writers have received inadequate treatment in this area, or none at all. Although excellent in all other ways, Birgit Bramsbäck's *James Stephens: A Literary and Bibliographical Study* offers only brief bibliographic data for primary works. Geoffrey Handley-Taylor and Timothy D'Arch-Smith's bibliography *C. Day-Lewis, The Poet Laureate* amounts to a brief checklist of the major works with information on physical size and format. Similarly, S. T. Joshi and Darrell Schweitzer's *Lord Dunsany* and Gary William Crawford's bio-bibliography *J. Sheridan Le Fanu* give only brief publication information for primary works (though these volumes are valuable for coverage of criticism). One can only turn to standard literature sources for primary bibliographies of George Farquhar, Charles Robert Maturin, Arthur Murphy, Thomas Moore, William Ailingham, J. M. Synge, and Lady Gregory; primary bibliographies for modern writers Brendan Behan, Brian Friel, Seamus Heaney, and Patrick Kavanagh have yet to appear in print.

... of Individual Authors (Secondary Sources): A monumental example of secondary bibliography is J.P. Wearing's three-volume *G. B. Shaw*, edited and compiled by Wearing, Elsie Adams, and Donald Haberman, a comprehensive listing of some 8,500 entries from 1871 through 1978. Descriptive and critical annotations and thorough indexing distinguish these volumes; researchers will have to look to general sources for more recent information. Equally comprehensive are K.P.S. Jochum's classified bibliography *W. B. Yeats*, now in its second edition; Cathleen Culotta Andonian's *Samuel Beckett: A Reference Guide*; E.H. Mikhail's annotated bibliographies of criticism *Brendan Behan* and *Lady Gregory*; Eugene Nelson James's reference guide *George Farquhar*; Samuel Woods's *Oliver Goldsmith: A Reference Guide*; Robert Langenfeld's *George Moore*; Edward Kopper's *John Millington Synge: A Reference Guide*; Jack Durant's *Richard Brinsley Sheridan*; and Susan Vander Closter's *Joyce Cary and Laurence Durrell*. All of the above need updating into the twenty-first century, since their publication dates range from 1980 to 1990.

Efforts to update and/or expand the coverage in Robert Deming's *A Bibliography of James Joyce Studies* include Thomas Jackson Rice's *James Joyce: A Guide to Research* and Thomas Staley's *An Annotated Critical Bibliography of James Joyce*, both published in the 1980s. O'Casey has been treated to more recent updating: Bernice Schrank's research and production sourcebook *Sean O'Casey* complements E.H. Mikhail's *Sean O'Casey and His Critics*. Coverage of criticism of O'Flaherty languishes with the publication of Paul Doyle's annotated bibliography *Liam O'Flaherty*, which covers material through 1970.

The 1990s saw the publication of several thorough secondary bibliographies, including

four volumes in G.K. Hall's "A Reference Guide to Literature" series — Michael Durkan and Rand Brandes's *Seamus Heaney*, Jonathan Allison's *Patrick Kavanagh*, George O'Brien's *Brian Friel*, and Lorraine Ricigliano's *Austin Clarke*. Adrienne Friedlander provided *Edna O'Brien: An Annotated Secondary Bibliography, 1980-1995*. Thomas Mikolyzk's annotated bibliography *Oscar Wilde*, Joshi and Schweitzer's *Lord Dunsany*, and Crawford's *J. Sheridan Le Fanu* describe both primary and secondary works.

Among the most desperately in need cumulation and updating of secondary literature is Swift: Louis Landa and James Tobin's *Jonathan Swift* covers 1895 to 1945; James Stathis picks up with *A Bibliography of Swift Studies, 1945-1965* and Richard Rodino with *Swift Studies, 1965-1980*. To these one can David Vieth's *Swift's Poetry, 1900-1980* and Milton Voight's *Swift and the Twentieth Century* (published in 1964!).

... **on Miscellaneous Subjects:** Don Nilsen's reference guide *Humor in Irish Literature, from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* is at once selective and synthetic. Nilsen's broad definition of Irishness makes Edmund Spenser the only sixteenth-century Irish writer to be covered and results in Nilsen's listing Cyril Tourneur for the seventeenth century and Flannery O'Connor for the twentieth. Chronologically arranged (by century of authors' birth), entries give major writers fullest treatment and include bibliographies; minor writers (e.g., John Winstanley, John Philpot Curran, Edmund Downey) are typically noted in passing.

John McVeagh's bibliography *Irish Travel Writing* covers the last eight centuries and includes brief annotations (on counties, cities, locales, and the like). A subject index references place names, historical periods, and topics such as antiquities, railways, and walking tours.

Biographical Resources

Although a good biographical dictionary of Irish writers has yet to be written, that is no real impediment to finding solid biographies of Irish writers given the abundance of British sources that cover them (including numerous volumes of *Dictionary of National Biography*). Of the several one-volume biographical dictionaries available, most generally useful for major writers remains Henry Boylan's *A Dictionary of Irish Biography*, recently published in its third edition. Unfortunately, this volume includes no entries on living writers. Anne Brady and Brian Cleeve's *A Biographical Dictionary of Irish Writers* will be valuable for information on the odd writer not included in other resources (the section "Writers in Irish and Latin" is particularly useful).

At the other biographical extreme, unique regional and county biographical dictionaries for Ireland continue to thrive. Recent works in this category include Bernard Browne's excellent *Living by the Pen: A Biographical Dictionary of County Wexford Authors*, which describes the long and significant contributions of Wexford writers, both historical and contemporary. Browne provides entries for major writers like John Banville, Dermot Bolger, Nicholas Furlong, Patrick Kavanagh, Thomas Kinsella, Thomas Moore, Billy Roche, William Trevor, and Oscar Wilde, and for many minor writers. An appendix identifies persons with even very minor or tenuous literary connections with Wexford (e.g., John Quincy Adams and James Joyce). *Dictionary of Ulster Biography*, compiled by Kate Newmann, is more general but lacks bibliographies and much of the detail available in other resources.

Indexes, Concordances, and Other Word Books

Most of the several kinds of verbal indexes — ranging from concordances to selective

glossaries and also including collections of quotations — relate to specific writers, with the best examples always based on clearly identified authoritative editions of writers' works. One recent notable exception is Richard Wall's *A Dictionary and Glossary for the Irish Literary Revival*, which amounts to an index of Irish language words and phrases used in Irish literature in English. Wall references works by a broad selection of major and minor writers, from Edmund Spenser through Roddy Doyle (b. 1958). Another exception is Padraic O'Farrell's *Green and Chaste and Foolish: Irish Literary and Theatrical Anecdotes*, which documents the vitality of Irish theatrical and intellectual life with quotations from writings of Swift, Goldsmith, and Sheridan through Wilde, Yeats, Behan, Beckett, and Hugh Leonard. Other sections cover the Abbey and Gate theaters, the National Library of Ireland, and other topics.

Although very few new concordances and indexes have been produced in the last two decades, several older compilations remain standard for a number of works by Irish writers, Joyce's being by far the most thoroughly indexed. Useful indexes to his works include Wolfhard Steppe and Hans Walter Gabler's *A Handlist to James Joyce's Ulysses: A Complete Alphabetical Index to the Critical Reading Text*, Ruth Bauerle's *A Word List of James Joyce's Exiles*, Wilhelm Fuger's *Concordance to James Joyce's Dubliners*, Paul Doyle's *A Concordance to the Collected Poems of James Joyce*, Leslie Hancock's *Word Index to James Joyce's Portrait of the Artist*, and Chester Anderson's *A Word Index to James Joyce's Stephen Hero*. Richard Wall's *An Anglo-Irish Dialect Glossary for Joyce's Works* is the most all-purpose index of specific verbal elements of Joyce's writings.

Important indexes to other authors and works include William Doremus Paden and Clyde Kenneth Hyder's *A Concordance to the Poems of Oliver Goldsmith*; Michael Shinagel's *A Concordance to the Poems of Jonathan Swift* and Harold Kelling and Cathy Lynn Preston's *A KWIC Concordance to Jonathan Swift's A Tale of a Tub, The Battle of the Books, and A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit, a Fragment*; E. Dean Bevan's ten-volume *A Concordance to the Plays and Prefaces of Bernard Shaw*; *A Concordance to the Plays of W.B. Yeats*, edited by Eric Domville, and Stephen Maxfield Parrish's *A Concordance to the Poems of W. B. Yeats*; Robert Lowery's *Sean O'Casey's Autobiographies: An Annotated Index*, and Michele Aina Barak and Rubin Rabinovitz's *A KWIC Concordance to Samuel Beckett's Trilogy: Molloy, Malone Dies, and The Unnamable and their A KWIC Concordance to Samuel Beckett's Murphy*.

Although no concordances to any of Wilde's works have been published, several selective collections of quotations, each wittily titled, attempt to capitalize on his popularity. Equipped with references keyed to a source bibliography and a thorough index of keywords, the topically arranged *The Wit and Wisdom of Oscar Wilde*, compiled and edited by Ralph Keyes, is the most useful work in this category. Others titles include *I Can Resist Everything except Temptation*, selected by Karl Beckson; *The Oscar Wilde Quotation Book*, edited by Gyles Brandreth; and *The Importance of Being a Wit: The Insults of Oscar Wilde*, compiled by Maria Leach. Similar collections for other Irish writers include *The Sayings of W. B. Yeats*, edited by Joseph Spence, and George Bryan and Wolfgang Mieder's compilation-index *The Proverbial Bernard Shaw*.

Irish Literary Periodicals

Librarians will certainly direct students to standard journal research tools, but resources for Irish literary periodicals are not lacking. One discussed under electronic resources, online *Searc's Web Guide*, provides a very handy list of both printed and electronic Irish journals. For historical research on nineteenth-century Irish magazines, John North's *The Waterloo Directory*

of Irish Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800-1900 remains an essential bibliography and guide. Many entries cite studies of specific periodicals, and the detailed indexing for subjects, personal names, and places of publication suggests additional research possibilities. This volume is partially updated (and will ultimately be supplanted) by North's monumental ten-volume *Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800-1900*, a work in progress. In addition to providing facsimiles of selected title pages, the new edition's entries update descriptions, bibliographic sources, locations, and other information for such titles as *Dublin Penny Journal*, *Dublin Review*, and *Dublin University Magazine*.

The monthly *Books Ireland*, which is essentially a less glossy, more artsy equivalent of *Publishers' Weekly*, provides up-to-date information on the Irish book trade. Features include well-illustrated interviews with writers and publishers; essays on literary and book world subjects, including many useful bibliographic surveys on topics as wide-ranging as recent Irish poetry and drama, religion in Ireland, the English language in Irish schools, architecture, and the 1798 Rebellion; and classified descriptions of new books in both English and Irish languages. Similarly useful, Boston College's quarterly *Irish Literary Supplement* features several dozen long scholarly reviews of books of interest to Irish studies, occasional articles and poetry, and interviews by and about leading Irish writers. This journal reflects the fullest range of Irish interest, particularly the Irish diaspora. Little attention is given to Irish language literature, however.

**Resources for Irish
literary periodicals are not
lacking.**

The field's most bibliographically important journal (in that it annually features the International Association for the Study of Irish Literature's bibliography) is *Irish University Review*. The journal also publishes a significant number of bibliographies on topics and individual writers. Other important scholarly journals include *Notes on Modern Irish Literature*, which is particularly valuable for critical studies of Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, and Heaney; the as yet unindexed semi-annual *Nua: Studies in Contemporary Irish Writing* (criticism, interviews, poetry, review essays, and book reviews); *The Poetry Ireland Review* (each issue guest edited by a different poet); *Colby Quarterly*, which has published special issues on Eavan Boland and Irish women novelists and plans another devoted to William Trevor (September 2002); *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, covering the full range of Irish writers and topics; *New Hibernia Review/Iris Eireannach Nua: A Quarterly Record of Irish Studies*, which has published significant research on a wide range of Irish writing and on Ireland's distinctive linguistic heritage and the Irish diaspora; and *Irish Studies Review*, an important (and well-illustrated) interdisciplinary journal that includes research and review articles and an extensive selection of book reviews. Five journals routinely publish literary criticism: *Bullán*, *Eigse*, *Eire-Ireland*, *Irish Review*, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, and *Working Papers in Irish Studies*. Topical periodicals worth noting include *Bealoideas* (folklore), *Eighteenth-Century Ireland/Iris an da Chultúr*, *History Ireland*, *Irish Journal of Feminist Studies*, *Long Room* (history of the book), *Nomina* (name studies), and *Peritia* (medieval studies).

Scholarly journals devoted to writers are particularly valuable in that they include not only criticism, research, and book reviews but also bibliographic contributions that update primary and secondary bibliographies. Journals focused on Joyce are prime examples: *James*

Joyce Quarterly's "Current JJ Checklist" gives comprehensive, international coverage of new editions of Joyce works and of secondary materials of all varieties, including reviews of theatrical productions, musical settings, and recordings; *Joyce Studies Annual* has published several important bibliographic features; the semiannual *James Joyce Literary Supplement* contains as many as 20 reviews of new works about Joyce and his contemporaries; and the newsletters *James Joyce Broadsheet* and *James Joyce Newestlatter* regularly include information about new publications. Journals devoted to Shaw include *Shaw: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies*, which in addition to publishing reviews includes a useful "Continuing Checklist of Shaviana"—descriptions of new editions of Shaw's works, works about Shaw, and recordings and other media related to him—and *Shavian: The Journal of the Shaw Society* and *Independent Shavian*, which both publish recent scholarship and book reviews. *Yeats: An Annual of Critical and Textual Studies* features a checklist of scholarship that updates the standard Yeats bibliography, and *Yeats Annual* publishes book reviews. Beckett serials include *Journal of Beckett Studies* (book and production reviews, many useful contributed bibliographies and surveys, and occasional photographs of productions), *Beckett Circle* (a newsletter containing book reviews and publication listings), and *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, an English-French annual published in Amsterdam. Last, both *Wild about Wilde Newsletter* and *Swift Studies: The Annual of the Ehrenpreis Center* include occasional bibliographic contributions. Librarians should warn users that not all of these periodicals are covered by major literary indexes.

Conclusion

Although much research on Irish literature of necessity begins in large general resources devoted to British literature, one would be mistaken to conclude that the network of reference materials for Irish literature is so inadequate as to disadvantage researchers. Indeed, this essay reveals that research industries thrive for Wilde, Shaw, Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, and others. Nonetheless, a book-length guide to reference works for research on Irish literature would certainly make a statement about Irish national identity. It remains to be seen just how the substance of such a guide would differ from those parts of reference works that recognize Irish literature in English as part of literature in English in general. Although many resources recognize Irish literature's unique identity, equally as many simply disregard, overlook, or ignore its distinctiveness. Until this changes—if it ever does—students will have to access Irish literature through the resources discussed in this essay and through the references materials that now sufficiently serve English literature, British literature, and literature in English in general.

Notes:

1. <http://www-english.tamu.edu/pubs/lrg>
2. Both volumes are available as part of Greenwood's *Studies in Irish Literature* CD-ROM and web site.

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IASIL: International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures

<http://www.ulst.ac.uk/faculty/humanities/lang+lit/iasil/>

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